

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for vending products comprising:
providing a vending machine having a cabinet and a door defining an inner cavity for holding commercial products for vending,
using a vending machine controller to control the operation of the vending machine based on a standardized vending machine protocol program;
using a money handling system including a coin acceptor/changer and a bill acceptor-dispenser for receiving and dispensing money;
said money handling system being of a size and configuration to be received within said cabinet in the space and location provided for a coin acceptor/changer and bill validating device;
said bill acceptor-dispenser including:
using a validator for determining the authenticity, and denomination, of notes inserted into said bill acceptor-dispenser as payment in a vending transaction and for generating signals for each received note;
a processor for receiving the validator signals and communicating with said vending machine controller;
receiving and holding notes received as payment in a vending transaction by said bill acceptor-dispenser in a note box;
in a note hopper storing notes received as payment in a vending transaction and selected to be dispensed as change in a later vending transaction by said bill acceptor-dispenser ; and
in a transportation unit directing notes determined to be authentic to one of said note box and said note hopper and dispensing notes as change in a vending transaction from said note hopper;

in said coin acceptor/changer receiving and validating coins and generating a signal signifying receipt and value of received coins to said vending machine controller; and using a program to calculate change to be dispensed by the vending machine and outputting signals indicative of the change to be dispensed to said bill acceptor-dispenser which controls the disbursement of currency and coins by said vending machine.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said bill acceptor-dispenser further comprises:

using a memory for maintaining a running accounting of the number and denominations of the notes contained in said note hopper.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein said bill acceptor-dispenser further comprises:

using a unit controller for controlling the operation of the bill acceptor-dispenser, said unit controller being capable of changing the characteristic used for directing notes to said note hopper.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3 wherein said processor is included in said unit controller, said unit controller further calculating the number of notes to be dispensed from said note hopper and the number of coins to be dispensed from said coin hopper to provide a combination of notes and coins to total an amount to be dispensed following the vending of an item.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4 wherein said processor runs a Control Program, said Control Program being capable of communicating with the vending machine controller and controlling the display of information to a user indicating the acceptability of bill denominations.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A method providing a bill acceptor dispenser for receiving and dispensing money in a vending machine for vending commercial products, and having a vending machine controller for controlling the operation of the vending machine based on a standardized vending machine protocol program and a coin acceptor/changer for receiving and validating coins and generating a signal signifying receipt and value of received coins to the vending machine controller;

comprising:

using a validator for sensing data relating to the authenticity, denomination, and type of note inserted into said validator as payment in a vending transaction and for generating signals corresponding to the sensed data for each received note;

using a processor for receiving and comparing said sensed data signals with stored data to validate the authenticity of said notes and for generating a signal signifying receipt and a designated value of said note within the limitations of the standardized protocol to said vending machine controller;

using a note box configured to receive and hold notes received by said bill acceptor-dispenser as payment in a vending transaction, and having a memory device attached to said note box;

in a note hopper storing notes received as payment in a vending transaction and selected to be dispensed as change by said bill acceptor-dispenser;

using a transportation unit for directing said notes determined to be authentic to one of said note box and said note hopper and for dispensing notes from said note hopper as change in a later vending transaction in response to a signal from said processor; and

wherein said acceptor-dispenser is of a size and configuration to be received within said vending machine without extensive reconfiguration or redesign of said vending machine.

8. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

providing a vending machine having a cabinet for storing commercial products to be sold;

in a vending machine controller controlling the operation of the vending machine based on a standardized vending machine protocol program;

in a coin acceptor/changer accepting and validating coins and dispensing coins as change upon command, said coin acceptor/changer located within said vending machine;

in a bill acceptor-dispenser accepting and validating notes inserted as payment in a vending transaction, storing selected notes inserted as payment in the vending transaction in a dispensable fashion for use as change in a later vending machine transaction and storing all other received notes inserted as payment in a non-dispensable fashion,

providing said bill acceptor-dispenser within said vending machine and electrically coupled to said vending machine controller and said coin acceptor/changer for controlling the dispensing of coins and notes as change-provided by said vending machine;

using a Control Program for controlling the denominations of notes to be accepted by said bill acceptor-dispenser based upon the availability of notes held in a dispensable fashion: and

wherein said bill acceptor-dispenser is sized to be received within said cabinet in the space previously occupied by a bill validating device so that no extensive reconfiguration or redesign of said vending machine is required.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 wherein said bill acceptor-dispenser further comprises:

a bezel assembly having an opening for allowing the insertion of notes into said bill acceptor-dispenser, said bezel assembly also having a display to provide a visual indication of at least one bill denomination.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said Control Program will allow to be accepted is oriented on a runway surface of said bezel assembly.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said Control Program will allow to be accepted is oriented on a surface adjoining a runway surface of said bezel assembly.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5 wherein said bill acceptor-dispenser further comprises:

a bezel assembly having an opening for allowing the insertion of notes into said bill acceptor-dispenser, said bezel assembly also having a display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said Control Program will allow to be accepted.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said Control Program will allow to be accepted is oriented on a runway surface of said bezel assembly.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 12 wherein said display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said Control Program will allow to be accepted is oriented on a surface adjoining a runway surface of said bezel assembly.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7 further comprising:

a bezel assembly having an opening for allowing the insertion of notes into said bill acceptor-dispenser, said bezel assembly also having a display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said processor will allow to be accepted.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein said display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said processor will allow to be accepted is oriented on a runway surface of said bezel assembly.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 wherein said display to provide a visual indication of the denomination of notes that said processor will allow to be accepted is oriented on a surface adjoining a runway surface of said bezel assembly.

18. (Currently Amended) A method for using a vending machine for vending products, the method comprising:

providing a cabinet and a door defining an inner cavity for holding commercial products for vending,

using a vending machine controller for controlling the operation of the vending machine based on a standardized vending machine protocol program;

using a money handling system including a coin acceptor/changer and a bill acceptor-dispenser for receiving and dispensing money;

said money handling system being of a size and configuration to be received within said cabinet in the space and location provided for a coin acceptor/changer and bill validating device;

said bill acceptor-dispenser using:

a validator for determining the authenticity, and denomination, of notes inserted into said bill acceptor-dispenser as payment in a vending transaction and for generating signals for each received note;

a processor for receiving the validator signals and communicating with said vending machine controller;

a note box configured to receive and hold notes received as payment in a vending transaction by said bill acceptor-dispenser;

a note hopper for storing notes received as payment in a vending transaction and selected to be dispensed as change in a later vending transaction by said bill acceptor-dispenser; and

a transportation unit for directing notes determined to be authentic to one of said note box and said note hopper and for dispensing notes from said note hopper as change in a vending transaction;

said coin acceptor/changer receiving and validating coins and generating a signal signifying receipt and value of received coins to said vending machine controller; and

using a program to calculate change to be dispensed by the vending machine and outputting signals indicative of the change to be dispensed to said bill acceptor-dispenser

which controls the disbursement of currency from said note hopper and coins from said coin acceptor/changer by said vending machine.

19. (Currently Amended) A bill acceptor-dispenser for receiving and dispensing money in a vending machine for vending commercial products, and having a vending machine controller for controlling the operation of the vending machine based on a standardized vending machine protocol program allowing acceptance of first value notes in denominations only up to a first value limitation and a coin acceptor/changer for receiving and validating coins and generating a signal signifying receipt and value of received coins to the vending machine controller;

the bill acceptor-dispenser comprising:

a validator for sensing data relating to the authenticity, denomination, and type of note inserted into said validator as payment in a vending transaction and for generating signals corresponding to the sensed data for each received note;

a processor controlling the validation, acceptance and recognition of second value notes received as payment in a vending transaction up to a second value exceeding said first value limitation and for receiving and comparing said sensed data signals with stored data to validate the authenticity of said second value notes and for generating a signal signifying receipt and a designated value of said second value note within the first value limitations of the standardized protocol to said vending machine controller;

a note box configured to receive and hold notes received by said bill acceptor-dispenser as payment in a vending transaction, and having a memory device attached to said note box;

a note hopper for storing notes received by said bill acceptor-dispenser as payment in a vending transaction and for providing change for a later vending machine transaction;

a transportation unit for directing said notes determined to be authentic to one of said note box and said note hopper and for dispensing notes as change from said note hopper in response to a signal from said processor; and

wherein said acceptor-dispenser is of a size and configuration to be received within said vending machine without extensive reconfiguration or redesign of said vending machine.

20. (Currently Amended) A vending machine comprising:

a cabinet for storing commercial products to be sold;

a vending machine controller for controlling the operation of the vending machine based on a standardized vending machine protocol program for accepting first value notes in denominations only up to a first value;

a coin acceptor/changer for accepting and validating coins and dispensing coins as change upon command, said coin acceptor/changer located within said vending machine;

a bill acceptor-dispenser for accepting and validating notes received as payment in a vending transaction, storing selected notes in a dispensable fashion for use as change in a later vending machine transaction and storing all other received notes received as payment in a vending transaction in a non-dispensable fashion,

said bill acceptor-dispenser being within said vending machine and electrically coupled to said vending machine controller and said coin acceptor/changer for controlling the dispensing of coins and notes as change-provided by said vending machine;

a Control Program controlling the validation, acceptance and recognition of second value notes up to a second value exceeding said first value and for controlling the denominations of notes to be accepted by said bill acceptor-dispenser based upon the availability of notes held in a dispensable fashion: and

wherein said bill acceptor-dispenser is sized to be received within said cabinet in the space previously occupied by a bill validating device so that no extensive reconfiguration or redesign of said vending machine is required.